CDC

OUTLAWS OF THE WEST

12¢

JANUARY

OUTLAWS of the WEST

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

REWARD

THE GREATEST ENTERTAINMENT IN WESTERN COMICS!!!

"COUSIN JACK"

"LAWMAN'S CURE"

"BUSHWHACK TRAIL"

"TWO TRAILS TO PARADISE"

JAM-PACKED WITH ACTION

Cousin JACK

THE CROWD IN THE ELITE CAFE WAS WATCHING MR. LARNEY, THE SLICKEST GAMBLER IN THE DAKOTA TERRITORY, FLEECE A SHABBY DRIFTER WHO'D CALLED HIMSELF "COUSIN JACK"... AND THEY HID THEIR GRINS AS THE DEFT DEALER SEPARATED THE STRANGER FROM HIS WAD! SOME OF THEM WERE STILL SMILING WHEN "COUSIN JACK" UNLIMBERED HIS BIG .44 COLT...

WATCH IT, COUSIN JACK'S GONNA...

I CAUGHT YA THAT TIME, MR. LARNEY!

BLAM

CLIC

THE STUNNED CROWD WAS STILL GAPING AS THE SHERIFF SLAMMED IN THROUGH THE SWINGING DOORS!

WHAT'S GOIN' ON HERE? YOU -- DROP THAT GUN!

TAKE IT EASY, AL... THE STRANGER CAUGHT LARNEY DEALIN' OFF THE BOTTOM OF THE DECK!

5176

OUTLAWS OF THE WEST Vol. 2, No. 57, Jan., 1966, published bimonthly by Charlton Comics Group, Charlton Building, Derby, Conn. 06418. Second Class postage paid at Derby, Conn. 06418.

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IS THAT RIGHT, STRANGER?

DEALT HIMSELF A KING TO GIVE HIMSELF A FULL HOUSE, SHERIFF! WHAT'S ALL THE FUSS ABOUT? HE AIN'T DEAD!

YOU'RE GETTIN' OLD AND SLOW, LARNEY! DIDN'T YOU SEE HIM GOIN' FOR HIS GUN?

I SURE DID!

I HAD MY DERRINGER OUT FIRST... PULLED THE TRIGGER...AND IT MISFIRED!

HE WOULD'VE SHOT ME IN COLD BLOOD!

AT THAT MINUTE, FELIX RIMSEN CAME SCREECHING ALONG WITH A BAD BRUISE ON HIS HEAD...

SHERIFF, WHERE'D YA GO? THE MINUTE YA LEFT... OWLHOOTERS BUSTED IN THE LOCKED DOOR AND ROBBED THE ATLAS GOLD SHIPMENT!

IT AIN'T POSSIBLE!

WE HAD A TIP FROM DENVER THAT OUTLAWS MIGHT TRY TO ROB THE ATLAS GOLD BULLION! I WAS GUARDIN' THE EXPRESS OFFICE UNTIL I HEARD THE SHOTS...

LOOKS LIKE HE MADE CHUMPS OUT OF ALL OF US!

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

MY GUN WAS TAMPERED WITH ...WAS DONE THIS AFTERNOON WHEN I WAS OVER AT THE BARBER SHOP GETTING A BATH! THIS COUSIN JACK WAS THERE AT THE SAME TIME!

HE LET ME CHEAT HIM, LOOKING AT HIS WATCH NOW AND THEN...WHEN HE WAS READY, HE CALLED ME ON CHEATING AND SHOT ME WITH NO RISK TO HIMSELF!

AND I LEFT THE EXPRESS OFFICE TO COME HERE... WHILE HIS GANG STOLE THE ATLAS GOLD!

OUTSIDE TOWN WITH THE STOLEN GOLD, COUSIN JACK'S GANG WAITED UNTIL...

HERE COMES COUSIN JACK!

YOU SURE WE'LL BE SAFE IN THE RED MESA COUNTRY?

GENERAL CROOK WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO GET UP THERE WITH THE WHOLE U.S. ARMY! MY PEOPLE ARE WINTERIN' ON MESA!

GREY WOLF IS OFF THE RESERVATION! WE GIVE HIM A LITTLE GOLD AND HE'LL KEEP THE LAWMEN OFF OUR BACK!

THEY RODE NORTH... THAT'S BAD, FRANK.

GREY WOLF IS UP ON THE MESA WITH HUNDREDS OF RENEGADE BUCKS!

HALF-STARVED BECAUSE THE INDIAN AGENT WON'T ISSUE RATIONS UNTIL THEY GO BACK TO THE RESERVATION... NO WONDER THEY HATE US!

COUSIN JACK LOOKS LIKE HE IS HALF-COMANCHE, SHERIFF! MAYBE HE'S GOT FRIENDS UP YONDER!

IF HE HAS... WE'RE IN PLENTY OF TROUBLE! COME ON!

THEN, COUSIN JACK RODE ON ALONE! ABOVE THEM LOOMED RED MESA... AN IMPREGNABLE NATURAL FORTRESS... ATOP WICK GREY WOLF AND HIS HUNGRY RENEGADES WERE PERCHED!

I AM ONE OF YOU... MY MOTHER IS OF GREY WOLF'S TRIBE!

YOU DRESS LIKE THE WHITE MEN... GREY WOLF SAYS TO KILL!

YOU KNOW ME, BLACK KNIFE... I AM YOUR COUSIN TOO!

I HAVE COME WITH GOLD FOR GREY WOLF! WITH GOLD HE CAN BUY MEAT FOR THE KETTLES AND BUY CORN MEAL FOR THE SQUAWS TO MAKE INTO BREAD!

HE WAS FOOLIN' US... HE KNEW ME RIGHT AWAY! HIS MOTHER AND MY MOTHER ARE RELATED! THAT'S WHY THEY ALL CALL ME COUSIN JACK!

I SURE HOPE THEY KEEP IT IN MIND, JACK!

GREY WOLF'S CAMP WAS SILENT... NO DOGS YAPPED, NO CHILDREN SCRAMBLED FOR TIDBITS AT THE COOKFIRES... AND NO FOOD WAS BEING COOKED! GREY WOLF LOOK LEAN AND ANGRY...

YOU BRING WHITE MEN INTO MY CAMP AT BAD TIME, COUSIN JACK! YOU YOURSELF ARE IN DANGER FROM MY PEOPLE!

I'M NOT WORRIED, GREY WOLF! HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO START EATING REG'LAR AGAIN?

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CONTINUED AFTER THE NEXT TWO PAGES

WE HAVE NO FOOD, JACK. UNLESS I GET MEAT FOR THE KETTLES SOON...

I GOT GOLD, GREY WOLF. I'LL GIVE YOU SOME, YOU SEND BRAVES UP TO LONG CAMP AND THEY CAN BUY GRUB WITH IT!

GREY WOLF CLEARED A COUPLE TEPEES FOR US! WE CAN STAY ALL WINTER IF WE LIKE! HE'S SENDIN' NORTH FOR GRUB SO WE'LL BE EATIN' GOOD TOO!

SHERIFF AL CAXTON KNEW THE COMANCHES CAMPED ON RED MESA WERE DEFYING THE U.S. ARMY WHEN THEY LEFT THE RESERVATION! THEY MIGHT WIPE OUT THE WHOLE POSSE... BUT AL CAXTON HAD A JOB TO DO!

AL'S GONNA GIT US ALL SCALPED!

THAT ONE MISSED... BUT NEXT SHOT'LL GET AL!

ZING

I'M HERE TO SPEAK WITH GREY WOLF! I COME IN PEACE!

GO BACK! NO WHITE MAN COMES TO RED MESA!

ZIP

I WANT A MAN CALLED COUSIN JA...

ALTHOUGH HE DIDN'T THINK THE COMANCHE SENTRY WANTED TO KILL HIM THE SHERIFF BOOTED HIS CAYUSE INTO A GALLOP!

HOLD YORE FIRE, MEN! NO SENSE IN WASTIN' BULLETS!

YOU GOIN' TO GET YOURSELF KILLED OVER THAT RASCAL? WE'LL GET HELP FROM THE 7TH CAVALRY! WE...

A LOT MORE MEN CAN GET KILLED YOUR WAY!

I'VE HUNTED UP THERE! I KNOW HOW TO REACH THE TOP WITHOUT GETTING SHOT AT! I WANT TO TALK TO GREY WOLF!

IT WAS DANGEROUS CLIMBING THE SIDE OF RED MESA IN THE DARK... BUT NOT AS DANGEROUS AS THE COMANCHE GUNS!

THE OWLHOOTER CALLIN' HIMSELF COUSIN JACK KNOWS THE COMANCHES GOOD, I RECKON....

THAT'S COUSIN JACK TALKIN' TO GREY WOLF...THE OUTLAWS ARE BEIN' TREATED REAL GOOD! IF I TRIED TO ARREST THEM HERE, COUSIN JACK COULD SHOOT ME DOWN!

YOU DID NOT TELL US THAT YOU HAD SHOT A MAN OR ROBBED GOLD, COUSIN JACK. YOU HAVE BROUGHT TROUBLE TO US...

I BROUGHT GOLD TOO, GREY WOLF!

I KNOW YOU. YOU ARE FOOLISH TO COME HERE. IF I CALL OUT...

HAD TO TAKE THE CHANCE, GREY WOLF!

THE FOUR MEN OUT THERE HAVE KILLED MEN TO GIT THAT GOLD! THEY ARE EVIL... AND THEY WILL BRING BAD LUCK TO YOUR PEOPLE IF THEY STAY HERE!

I SAID I WOULD LET THEM STAY HERE. THEY HAVE MY WORD...

I AM UNARMED, GREY WOLF! IF I CAN GO OUT THERE AND TAKE THEM PRISONER WILL YOUR MEN INTERFERE?

YOU CANNOT FIGHT WITH THEM WITHOUT WEAPONS. IF YOU WISH TO GET YOURSELF KILLED... I WILL NOT STOP YOU!

YOU BOYS ARE GOIN' TO RIDE DOWN WITH ME IN THE MORNIN'... SO YOU BETTER TURN IN EARLY!

IT'S THE SHERIFF, JACK!

COUSIN JACK WENT FOR HIS IRON! IT LOOKED BAD FOR THE LAWMAN...

GET HIM YOU GUYS!

MISSED HIM!

SHERIFF AL CAXTON HAD TO KEEP MOVING... OR DIE! HIS SMASHING TACKLE GOT THE SECOND OWLHOOTER BEFORE HE COULD FIRE AGAIN....

DON'T KILL ROSCOE, SPIKE!

GREY WOLF SUDDENLY TOOK A HAND SUBDUING COUSIN JACK WHEN THAT RASCAL SHOWED SIGNS OF RESUMING HOSTILITIES!

I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHY, CHIEF, BUT I SURE AM GRATEFUL FOR YORE HELP!

HE SAYS HE IS MY COUSIN... AND HE SPEAK TRUTH... BUT HE COMES FROM A BRANCH OF THE FAMILY THAT THE REST OF US DESPISE! I TOOK HIS GOLD BUT I WAS ONLY WAITING...

...FOR AN OPPORTUNITY TO RETURN HIM TO THE WHITE MEN WITH WHOM HE HAS CHOSEN TO LIVE! YOU TAKE HIM AND HIS FRIENDS IN THE MORNING!

THANKS A LOT, CHIEF! I'LL SEND A WAGONLOAD OF GRUB AND A DOZEN HEAD OF PRIME BEEF CATTLE UP HERE SOON AS I GIT BACK TO TOWN!

END

THE DUEL THAT BACKFIRED

Franklyn Maddox, the famous historian of the Old West, makes a very important observation with this comment: "There came a time when you couldn't settle things with bullets but only with words. And likewise, there came a time when you couldn't settle things with words but only with bullets. They say that Sheriff Jim Gardler was a man who used that bit of philosophy very well while he wore the badge of office. In fact, as this episode in his career well shows, he even managed to use words when it had to be settled by bullets.

Parsons Springs was a cattle town and at times it was really wild. After one unfortunate event in which three men were killed, the decent part of the community went into action. With the result that there was a new sheriff in office. For sixty dollars a month and expenses, it was expected that Jim Gardler would handle every and any situation. And if necessary, "die with his boots on." At the end of three months it was evident that he was taming the town. And then he tackled Lou Adlers, who ran "The Silver Dollar" which was a bar and gambling place. Gambling was legal but not a fixed wheel. One evening Jim Gardler and two deputies entered the place, seized the wheel, took it apart and showed how it had been fixed.

Lou Adlers got out of that fix by claiming he knew nothing about it. That his manager was the crooked one. And to back it up he offered to make refunds. One thing was certain. Lou Adlers would do any and everything to "get" the sheriff. And a month later, Mike Smith came to town. His reputation as a gunslinger was well known. The technique used by these men was a simple one. He came to town and was paid to "get" a victim. He found some excuse to challenge him to a duel and killed him. If the man refused to fight he was also finished with the tag of being yellow. And you must remember that in those days the duel was still legal.

Mike Smith checked in at the one and only hotel in town. He hadn't been in his room for more than ten minutes when somebody knocked at his door. With gun in his hand he opened the door and soon faced the sheriff who entered.

"Mind if I have a few words with you?" was the request. "I understand you are here to kill me."

"I never kill a man," grinned Mike Smith. "They just get in the way of my bullets. Can always leave town, you know."

"I haven't the slightest objection to fighting you," were the unexpected words. "But I hope you were well paid by Lou Adlers. My death is worth at least five thousand dollars to him. And I believe in fair play. I don't want him to cheat you."

"What makes you think you carry such a high price on your scalp?" demanded a curious Mike Smith. "Your gambler friend runs a crooked wheel. With me out of the way he can make at least ten thousand dollars more in a season. So you should get at least half of it."

"I think you got something there," conceded Mike Smith. "I don't like to get underpaid for my work. What do you suggest I do?"

It was a startled Lou Adlers who faced the sheriff and the man he had hired to kill the lawman. He listened to what Mike Smith had to say.

"He's crazy," snapped back the gambler. "I never paid him any money to come here and get you."

"Are you calling me a liar?" demanded the gunslinger as his hand moved slowly towards his holster.

The blood left Lou Adlers' face as he realized he had been very cleverly trapped by the sheriff. What could he do? To deny it would infuriate the man he had hired. To admit it would make him liable at once for an arrest. He knew he was beaten.

"I'll be out of town before sunset," he pleaded. "Just let me live."

"I met a lot of yellow livered creatures but you take the prize," said the gunslinger with contempt in his voice. "So get out of town."

It was two days later that Mike Smith went to the Sheriff's office to say a farewell to him.

"Been doing a lot of thinking. Came to the conclusion you are one clever man. You talked your way out of me killing you and got rid of Lou Adlers at the same time. My hat is off to you.

TWO TRAILS TO PARADISE

THE WAGON TRAIN WAS HEADING ACROSS THE GREAT PLAINS, ONE OF HUNDREDS CRAWLING WESTWARD THAT YEAR! WHEN THE KIOWAS STRUCK, THE MEN OF THE TRAIN FOUGHT BRAVELY.... AND DROVE OFF THE ATTACKERS! BUT ONE WARRIOR TOOK WITH HIM A SOUVENIR.... ONE OF THE TWO SONS OF AARON SPRINGS!

HE'S GOT MY LITTLE NICHOLAS! SOMEONE STOP HIM....THAT RASCAL TOOK MY BOY!

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WHAT LED THE KIOWA WAR CHIEF TO NICHOLAS SPRINGS? KIOWAS DIDN'T TAKE PRISONERS WHEN THEY RAIDED WAGON TRAINS.... HAD HE CAUGHT A GLIMPSE OF THE BOY'S LAUGHTER AT THE HEIGHT OF THE RAID DID HE SENSE A KINSHIP OF THE SPIRIT?

THERE HAD BEEN TWO BOYS THERE! WAS IT ONLY CHANCE THAT DIRECTED THE WARRIOR'S HAND WHEN HE TOOK ONE AND LEFT SAMUEL SPRINGS BEHIND?

NICHOLAS SPRINGS FOUGHT FROM THE FIRST DAY HE ARRIVED IN THE KIOWA VILLAGE! HE FOUGHT DESPERATELY, SAVAGELY WITH TEETH AND TALONS....

YOU LET THEM DESTROY EACH OTHER, TUGALA?

THE WHITE CHILD IS A STRANGE ONE! HIS PEOPLE MOURN HIM NOW....

...BUT I THINK THEY WOULD CRY EVEN MORE IF I DID NOT TAKE HIM! HE IS LIKE A WOLF CUB IN A LITTER OF MONGRELS... HE HAS SHARPER TEETH AND AN INSTINCT TO KILL!

INDIAN BOYS HIS OWN AGE AND SIZE REFUSED TO FIGHT LIGHT-EYES....

I WILL KILL LIGHT-EYES.... HE TRIED TO KILL ME!

YOU BREAK LAW OF TRIBE.... I KILL!

SPLAT

NOW... I USE YOUR CLUB ON YOU!

BLAM

THE BOY CALLED LIGHT-EYES WHO DID NOT REMEMBER HIS OTHER NAME WAS NICHOLAS SPRINGS... COULD NOT UNDERSTAND THIS INJUSTICE AT THE HANDS OF THE KIOWA CHIEF! HE, LIGHT-EYES, HAD BEEN RIGHT! THE OTHER TWO...

I DID WRONG TO BRING YOU HERE, LIGHT-EYES! YOU ARE DIFFERENT AND YOU CAN NOT STAY ANY LONGER! YOU MUST LEAVE!

THEY BROKE THE TRIBAL LAWS OF COMBAT! YOU PUNISH ME! YOU TOOK ME FROM MY PEOPLE. FOR THIS -- YOU PUNISH ME! I WILL GO. BUT I WILL BE AN ENEMY OF THE KIOWA.

WITHOUT FOOD OR A HORSE. OR A BLANKET, LIGHT-EYES LEFT THE KIOWA VILLAGE. HE WAS JUST A KID.... TAKEN FROM HIS OWN PEOPLE IN THE BEGINNING, NOW BANISHED BY THE INDIANS!.

THAT HE SURVIVED WAS A SMALL MIRACLE.

HE'D LEARNED FROM THE KIOWA. THEY CONSIDERED IT GREAT WORK TO STEAL PONIES FROM OTHER TRIBES.... AND NOW AT 17, LIGHT-EYES WAS PRACTICING SOME OF THE LESSONS HE'D LEARNED.

SOMETHIN'S 'MAKIN' THE HORSES JUMPY... I'LL HAVE A LOOK!

HORSE-THIEVIN' KIOWA! FREEZE, INJUN, OR I'LL VENTILATE YORE SKULL!

INSIDE, TUCK WASHO TOOK A GOOD LOOK AT HIS PRISONER....

LOOK AT HIS EYES! HE AIN'T A KIOWA LIKE I THOUGHT!

YOU SPEAK ENGLISH, THIEF?

THEIR WORDS WERE FAMILIAR. HE HADN'T HEARD HIS OWN TONGUE SINCE HE'D BEEN A TODDLER BUT HE REMEMBERED...

MY NAME... NICHOLAS.

WE'LL LISTEN SOME OTHER TIME, NICK! GIT OVER THERE AN' EAT SOME GRUB! WE'RE HEADED NORTH AN' WE GOT A SPARE BRONC! WE'RE TAKIN' YOU ALONG!

SAMUEL SPRINGS LOOKED MUCH THE SAME AS HIS LOST BROTHER, NICHOLAS! THE FAMILY HAD GONE ON WEST AND SETTLED IN PARADISE VALLEY IN COLORADO...

YOUR FATHER'S BRINGING THE CATTLE DOWN FROM THE UPPER VALLEY, SAM. HE DOESN'T WANT RUSTLERS TO HAVE A CHANCE AT THIS HERD.

I'M BIG ENOUGH NOW TO TOTE A HAND GUN AND HELP PAW PROTECT OUR PROPERTY, MA. I'LL RIDE UP THERE TO MEET HIM.

BE CAREFUL, SAM. YOU'RE ALL WE'VE GOT NOW...

DON'T START THINKIN' ABOUT NICHOLAS NOW, MA. I'LL BE CAREFUL.

MEANWHILE, WHILE SAMUEL SPRINGS GREW TOWARD MANHOOD WITH THE HELP OF LOVING PARENTS, NICHOLAS SPRINGS HAD NO HELP AT ALL! ONLY BRUTALITY FROM OUTLAWS...

I SAID CURRY THAT BRONC!

I HAD TO GET WOOD FIRST! I...

DO NOT HIT ME. I AM NOT A DOG.

YUH'LL BE A DEAD DAWG IN ONE MORE MINUTE, SONNY!

THE BOY WHO'D BEEN A KIOWA WAIF FOR SO LONG LEAPED FOR HIS ENEMY! THE OUTLAW HAD SHOT MEN BEFORE BUT HE DIDN'T HAVE TIME TO SHOOT THIS ONE!

THE OUTLAW, FAST GUN AND ALL, WAS NO MATCH FOR THE CAT-QUICK BOY....

HEY, LOOK... HE'S WHUPPIN' TUCK!

THEIR LAUGHS WERE WIPED AWAY A SPLIT SECOND LATER AS NICHOLAS SPRINGS SNATCHED THE GUN AND COCKED IT....

NO LAUGH!

YOU LAUGH... NEXT TIME I KILL!

ZZING

BLAM

BEFORE HE WAS 21 YEARS OLD, NICHOLAS WAS THE LEADER OF THE OUTLAW GANG! HE HAD NEVER REMEMBERED HIS LAST NAME! AND HE HAD PECULIARITIES EVEN AS AN OUTLAW...

DON'T SHOOT BACK.. THEY CAN'T HIT US ANYHOW!

BAM

BANK

HE RULED THEM WITH AN IRON HAND...

YOU HIT THE TELLER IN THE SHOULDER. THE OLD GUY MIGHT EVEN DIE FROM IT. YOU COULDA BATTED HIM WITH THE GUN BARREL INSTEAD, MOONEY!

I NEVER TIED UP WITH A GANG AS SQUEAMISH AS THIS ONE ABOUT SHOOTIN' PEOPLE, BOSS!

I AIN'T SQUEAMISH, POLECAT... I'D AS MUCH SHOOT YOU RIGHT NOW AS LOOK AT YA! I JUST DON'T LIKE SHOOTIN' GOOD PEOPLE, IS ALL!

HIS BROTHER AND FATHER WERE HAVING TROUBLES ABOUT THEN! THEIR RANCH IN PARADISE VALLEY WAS TOO CLOSE TO THE BORDER ... TOO CLOSE TO THE BADLANDS... AND THEIR HERDS WERE FREQUENT TARGETS FOR THE RUSTLERS!

PULL UP, SAM.... CAN'T STOP 'EM NOW!

ONE LAST BULLET FIRED BY AN OUTLAW CAUGHT AARON SPRINGS IN THE CHEST....

BLAM

I'M NOT GOIN' TO DIE, SAM. JUST GET ME HOME. LET 'EM HAVE THE BLASTED CATTLE THIS TIME!

THE OUTLAWS PASSED THE WORD. AARON SPRINGS WAS HURT, ONLY SAM, HIS ONLY SON; WAS LEFT TO DEFEND THE PLACE!

WE'LL TAKE OVER THE SPREAD.... USE THAT FOR A HIDE-OUT! SELL THE HERD AT ABILENE FOR BIG MONEY!

WE'LL ALL HIT THE PLACE! THE BOY WON'T LAST FIVE MINUTES AGAINST US!

SAM SPRINGS? AARON SPRINGS? I LIKE THE SOUND OF THEIR NAMES! AN' THEY'RE GOOD PEOPLE! RECKON I BETTER LEAVE THIS BUNCH FOR GOOD AN' ALL!

THE YOUNG OUTLAW, NICK NICHOLAS, NEVER LOOKED BACK! HE'D MADE UP HIS MIND..

I NEVER WAS THEIR KIND ANYHOW! RECKON I'VE BEEN A REAL FOOL!

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HE HALLOOD THE HOUSE BEFORE DAWN... AND GOT AN ANSWER FROM SAM SPRINGS INSIDE...

I'M NICK NICHOLAS. JUST LEFT THE OUTLAWS UP IN THE BADLANDS. THEY'RE GONNA CLEAN YOU OUT COME MORNIN'!

GIT DOWN AN' COME IN WITH YOUR HANDS UP NEAR YOUR EARS.

HOW DO I KNOW YOU'RE NOT HERE TO SHOOT US ALL DOWN AND....

TAKE ANOTHER LOOK, SAM! HE'S THE IMAGE OF YOU... HE'S OUR SON, NICHOLAS!

MY NAME IS NICK NICHOLAS... BUT... BUT I DO KNOW YUH, MA'AM! WHEN I WAS LITTLE... ARE YOU MY MAW?

YES, NICHOLAS... YOU'VE COME BACK TO US AT LAST!

WELCOME HOME, SON!

BROTHER NICHOLAS, IF WE'RE GONNA BE RAIDED BY MORNIN'... WE GOT CHORES TO DO TONIGHT!

IT WASN'T MUCH OF A FIGHT! A DOZEN OWLHOOTERS AGAINT NICK AND SAM SPRINGS... WEREN'T ENOUGH! THE TWIN BROTHERS SENT COLT THUNDER AT THEM AND CHASED THEM BACK TO THE BADLANDS.

BAM BLAM BAM

THE WHOLE FAMILY RODE IN TO HOLWELL, THE COUNTY SEAT....WHERE NICK SPRINGS TOLD THE SHERIFF ALL THAT HE'D DONE UP TILL THEN! THE SHERIFF COULDN'T GRANT A PARDON BUT...

I'LL RIDE WITH YOU TO THE STATE CAPITAL, NICK. I THINK THE GOVERNOR WILL INSTRUCT A JUDGE TO GIVE YOU A SUSPENDED SENTENCE AND PUT YOU ON PROBATION FOR A FEW YEARS FOR DOIN' WHAT YOU DID BEFORE YOU FOUND OUT WHO YOU WERE!

END

THE GUNSLINGER, SMOKEY MIMMS, HAD SHOT A CLERK IN THE WESTERN EXPRESS OFFICE JUST OUTSIDE TULSA, OKLA. THE CLERK, TOM KINLAN, HAD A NEPHEW AND THIS WAS THE MAN WHO'D FOLLOWED SMOKEY MIMMS INTO THE BADLANDS BEYOND THE REACH OF THE LAW AND NORM KINLAN RAN INTO A SLUG FROM THE SAME COLT THAT HAD ALMOST ENDED HIS UNCLE'S LIFE.

BUSHWHACK TRAIL

WALKED RIGHT INTO IT, DIDN'T YA?

BLAM!

5174

IF KINLAN HAD MOVED...MIMMS WAS READY TO SHOOT AGAIN! BUT THE MAN WHO'D FOLLOWED A VENGEANCE TRAIL SEEMED TO BE DEAD.

I'LL SELL HIS CAYUSE AND SIX-GUN TO ONE OF THE BOYS AT THE POISON SPRING!

FOR HOURS, THE SUN BAKED THE STILL, LIFELESS FORM. DESERT LIFE WENT ON AROUND THE BODY OF THE FALLEN MAN....

TOWARD SUNSET, KINLAN STIRRED. THE HEAD LIFTED AND...

MY HEAD... HE SHOT ME IN THE HEAD!

NO FRACTURE... MAYBE A CONCUSSION! ACHES LIKE CRAZY.... BUT I'LL LIVE!

NOW, I'VE GOT ANOTHER REASON TO FIND SMOKEY MIMMS... AND FINISH HIM OFF!

THIS WAS NEW COUNTRY TO KINLAN... BUT HE FOLLOWED MIMMS' TRAIL.... RIGHT PAST THE ODD SIGN!

POISON SPRING? NEVER HEARD OF ONE AROUND HERE....

POISON SPRING 1 MILE

HE FOUND THE POISON SPRING.... THE PROPRIETOR'S ACCURATE NAME FOR THE KIND OF HOSPITALITY AVAILABLE INSIDE!

Poison Spring

MIMMS MUST BE INSIDE!

INSIDE, SMOKEY MIMMS HAD BRAGGED ABOUT DOWNING KINLAN... AN NOW HE WAS AUCTIONING OFF KINLAN'S HORSE AND GUN!

I GOT $40 FOR THE CAYUSE... NOW, WHO'LL PAY $10 FOR THE SIX-GUN?

HAND IT TA HEAPHY AN' BUY US ALL SOME OF HIZ' PIZEN BOOZE!

THAT'S A GOOD IDEA! THE IRON NEVER DID THAT DUDE MUCH GOOD! I KNOCKED HIM OFF LIKE A CAN OFF A ROCK!

FIRST SLUG DID THE JOB... HIT 'IM RIGHT BETWEEN THE EYES!

YOU'RE A LIAR, MIMMS!

WHO SAID THA... YOU! I THOUGHT I FINISHED YOU OFF, CHUMP! NICE OF YA TO COME HERE SO'S I CAN FINISH THE JOB!

YOU SHOT MY UNCLE, MIMMS...

WAIT A MINUTE! YOU GOT A POSSE WITH YA? WHAT'S YORE GAME?

MIMMS BROUGHT MY BRONC HERE! I JUST PUT A NOTE ON THE SADDLE AND SENT IT BACK TO MY RANCH!

ALL THE BRONCS ARE GONE! THE DUDE TURNED 'EM LOOSE... THEY'RE SCATTERED FROM HERE TO THE BORDER!

AND THE SHERIFF WILL BE ON HIS WAY OUT HERE BY MORNIN'!

MIMMS HAD HEARD ENOUGH! HE FIRED... AT POINT-BLANK RANGE!

BAM!

MIMMS MISSED... AND KINLAN THREW A CHAIR AT HIM... MAKING THE OUTLAW MISS A SECOND TIME!

LET MIMMS GET WHAT'S COMIN' TO HIM... IF THE SHERIFF CAPTURES HIM, MAYBE HE WON'T BOTHER COMIN' AFTER US!

I'M GOIN' TO DO A JOB ON YOU WITHOUT A SHOOTIN' IRON, MIMMS!

POW

WANT A DRINK, MISTER?

BETTER DRINK IT YOURSELF. WHEN THE SHERIFF ARRIVES, HE'LL PROBABLY CLOSE THIS PLACE AND BREAK ALL THE BOTTLES!

END

DEPUTY SHERIFF JETHRO CLAY CAUGHT THE OUTLAW MOONING AROUND IN SPARKLE, A GHOST TOWN IN THE BLACK HILLS! THE OWLHOOTER TRIED TO USE HIS SIX GUN BUT HE DIDN'T GET ENOUGH TIME....

LAWMAN'S CURE

I'LL FIX... UNGH!

5173

YOU'RE NOT GETTIN' AWAY THIS TIME, SONNY!

OUTLAW HANK TAYLOR HAD ALWAYS BEEN A ROUGH, TOUGH KID IN A BRAWL...BUT HE WAS UP AGAINST A PROFESSIONAL LAWMAN!

I'LL TEAR YORE EARS OFF!

I'LL OOOOFF!!

THE SHERIFF HIT HIM THREE TIMES...THIS WAS ENOUGH!

THE SHERIFF SAT DOWN TO WAIT. HE WASN'T IN A HURRY...

YOU... YOU'RE A MIGHTY MEAN MAN, SHERIFF!

YOU MEAN 'CAUSE I DIDN'T LET YOU KILL ME WITH THIS SIX-GUN? I RECKON I WAS A MITE MEAN AT THAT, SONNY.

YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO HIT ME THAT MUCH, IS WHAT I MEAN, SHERIFF.

THE SHERIFF LOOKED AROUND AT THE GHOST TOWN INHABITED BY SIDEWINDERS, BATS, LIZARDS, AND NOTHING ELSE....

YOUR DAD WORKED RIGHT HERE IN SPARKLE ONCE, SONNY. SO DID I...WE WORKED TOO HARD TO EVER THINK ABOUT STEALIN' SOMEONE ELSE'S GOLD THEN!

I'M GOIN' TO TAKE YOUR BRONC AND SIX-GUN AND RIDE BACK TO THE COUNTY SEAT! I'LL LEAVE YOU HERE WITH SOME FLOUR AND BEANS ....YOU CAN LIVE ON RATTLESNAKE MEAT IF YOU CAN'T FIND TASTIER GAME! YOU WORK THE OLD MINE...THERE'S STILL TRACIN'S OF GOLD THERE!

IT WAS A GAMBLE...BUT AS THE SHERIFF SAID... HE'D KNOWN HANK TAYLOR'S DADDY IN THE OLD DAYS WHEN SPARKLE WAS A ROARING BOOM TOWN!

HIS FATHER'S BEEN DEAD FOR TEN YEARS...AND HIS MOTHER ALWAYS WAS TOO EASY ON THE KID!

TIME DRAGGED FOR THE MAN WITH THE BADGE! HE FOUGHT THE IMPULSE TO GO BACK EVERY DAY FROM THE FIRST WEEK....

SHERIFF'S OFFICE

I'LL RIDE BACK TO SPARKLE TOMORROW...

BACK TO SPARKLE ONE MONTH LATER ...

HE'S GOT TO BE HERE.... HE COULDN'T WALK.... HE'D DIE OF THIRST BEFORE HE REACHED A WATER HOLE!

HOLD IT, SHERIFF!

JUST THOUGHT I'D FUN YOU A LITTLE, SHERIFF! GIT DOWN... I GOT ANTELOPE MEAT COOKIN' ON THE FIRE! I EXPECTED YOU TODAY!

YOU CAN LEAVE MY BRONC IF YOU LIKE, SHERIFF... BUT I'M GOIN' TO STAY FOR AWHILE! I TOOK OUT CONSIDERABLE GOLD...I'M A REFORMED MAN, SHERIFF!

I ONLY HOPE I NEVER HAVE TO COME AFTER YOU AGAIN, HANK!

YOU WON'T, SHERIFF!

END